United Nations A/AC.109/2007/SR.7

General Assembly

Distr.: General
31 October 2007

Original: English

Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Summary record of the 7th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 20 June 2007, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Ferrari ..... (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines)

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07-38869 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

Requests for hearings

2. **The Chairperson** drew attention to aides-memoires 07/07 and 08/07, which contained requests for hearings on the question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) and Guam, respectively. She took it that the Committee wished to accede to those requests.

3. *It was so decided.*

Question of New Caledonia (A/AC.109/2007/9 and A/AC.109/2007/L.13)

4. **The Chairperson** drew attention to the working paper on New Caledonia prepared by the Secretariat and contained in document A/AC.109/2007/9, and to draft resolution A/AC.109/2007/L.13.

5. **Ms. Takaku** (Papua New Guinea), introducing draft resolution A/AC.109/2007/L.13, said that new developments that had taken place in the Territory since the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 61/126 necessitated several changes in the draft resolution. Paragraphs 4, 9 and 20 were new; and changes had been made to paragraphs 3, 8, 12, 21, 22, 23 and 25. In paragraph 12, the words "*with satisfaction*" should be deleted.

6. *Draft resolution A/AC.109/2007/L.13, as orally revised, was adopted.*

Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Draft resolution A/AC.109/2007/L.10

7. *Draft resolution A/AC.109/2007/L.10 was adopted.*

Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations (A/62/65, E/2007/47 and A/AC.109/2007/L.11)

Draft resolution A/AC.109/2007/L.11

8. *Draft resolution A/AC.109/2007/L.11 was adopted.*

9. **Mr. Paletsky** (Russian Federation), explaining his delegation's position, said that his delegation had not objected to the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus, but would continue to be guided by its consistent position when the matter was taken up by the Fourth Committee, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

Economic and other activities which affect the interests of peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories (A/AC.109/2007/2-10, A/AC.109/2007/12 and A/AC.109/2007/L.12)

Draft resolution A/AC.109/2007/L.12

10. *Draft resolution A/AC.109/2007/L.12 was adopted.*

Questions of American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Guam, Montserrat, Pitcairn, Saint Helena, Tokelau, the Turks and Caicos Islands and the United States Virgin Islands (A/AC.109/2007/2-8, A/AC.109/2007/10, A/AC.109/2007/14-16 and A/AC.109/2007/L.9)

Question of Guam

Hearing of petitioners

11. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, Ms. Flores Perez took a seat at the petitioners' table.*

12. **Ms. Flores Perez** said that the working paper on Guam (A/AC.109/2007/16) was incomplete in that first, it did not include an independent analysis of the impact that an intensified United States militarization of Guam would have on Chamorro self-determination; second, it did not provide a complete picture of the militarization of Guam; and third, it included many citations based on such secondary sources as news articles and polls rather than primary sources such as Government documents and reports.

13. The strained political, social and economic climate in Guam was a direct result of the cumulative impact of the inequitable political and economic relationship between Guam and its administering Power, the United States of America, whose military interests took precedence over local policies to the detriment of Guam's interests. The planned military build-up unveiled by the United States in 2005 would have large and potentially irreversible social, political, economic and environmental effects, and had been decided on without the consent of the Chamorro people.

14. The increased militarization of Guam, including the refurbishment of existing military facilities and infrastructure and the construction of new ones, would put the inhabitants of Guam in harm's way and make the island more of a target for current and potential adversaries of the United States, despite the inhabitants' lack of voice in the matter. Additionally, the scheduled transfer to Guam of an estimated 35,000 military personnel, dependants and support staff, along with 20,000 contract workers being brought in to support the build-up, would radically alter the demography of the island and further marginalize the Chamorros.

15. There was also a significant impact on the political process in Guam, as well as a danger to Chamorro self-determination, in that the United States military had taken the position that its personnel stationed in Guam had a constitutional right to participate in Guam's local elections. However, United States citizenship for Chamorros in Guam could be revoked by the United States Congress at any time; Chamorros could vote in local elections, but not for the United States President and Commander-in-Chief, whose policies of increased militarization had such a serious impact on their daily lives.

16. Increasing numbers of Chamorros were being recruited to serve in the United States military; their levels of enlistment as well as casualty rates in American wars were among the highest of any American ethnic group. Yet there was evidence that colonies like Guam were being deliberately underfunded by the United States Government, trapping the island in a cycle of dependency. The resulting economic underdevelopment, combined with constant promises of military spending on the island, had led the people of Guam to accept, reluctantly or not, whatever the United States saw fit to give them. The $15 billion allocated to the military build-up had been presented to the local population as if it would benefit them directly, but military officials had made clear that most of that money would be spent to relocate United States military personnel to Guam and on expanding and improving current military bases on the island.

17. The expenditure of $15 billion on a military build-up could not be justified in view of the ever more glaring inequality on the island, with escalating living costs, insufficient funds for teacher salaries, shortages of doctors and supplies in the only local hospital, and the Government having to borrow $770 million on the bond market and saddling the people with debt for generations to come. Government utilities like the Guam Waterworks Authority and the Department of Public Works lacked funds to comply with United States federal laws and, being portrayed as lacking the capacity to deal with the military build-up, were under pressure to privatize. That pressure had resulted in the hiring of a private contractor to take over part of the Authority's functions; combined with the construction of a new landfill in an environmentally sensitive area, it jeopardized local control over, as well as the quality of, Guam's water resources and natural habitat.

18. More and more Chamorros and islanders were fleeing poverty and inflation, selling their land in the high real estate market and moving to the United States in search of a better life. Chamorros were thus losing control over their lands, and their cultural survival and attainment of full self-governance were under increasing threat. The burden of economic underdevelopment existed largely because Guam was prevented from managing its own economy. United States federal laws superseded all local laws, and the United States Government asserted control over Guam's economic resources, such as its exclusive economic zone, favouring American corporate interests at Guam's expense. Even the military build-up could be seen as an extension of American economic interests, since American defence contractors were making huge profits, and only a low percentage of military contracts were going to local businesses.

19. Local supporters of the military build-up were largely comprised of the Guam Chamber of Commerce and other corporate associations standing to gain from that build-up; they had a stranglehold on the news media that served to stifle debate in the community. *The Pacific Daily News*, the leading newspaper on the island, was a subsidiary of the United States-based Gannett Company, which also published the official newspapers of the various branches of the United States military; it relentlessly editorialized against the public systems and in favour of privatization to support the military build-up.

20. For the people of Guam to achieve self-determination under such conditions, it was essential to reaffirm the principles of the Charter of the United Nations of promoting equal rights, human dignity and self-determination of all peoples and the paramount interests of peoples who had not attained self-

determination, and to reaffirm General Assembly resolution 1541 (XV) stipulating the ways in which a Non-Self-Governing Territory could attain a full measure of self-government, and the Chamorro right to self-determination. She urged that adequate resources be made available for redoubling the effort to implement the mandate for eradicating colonialism, including funding from the administering Power for an education campaign on the island to disseminate information among the people of Guam regarding their political status; and called for a fact-finding mission to be dispatched to Guam as soon as possible to meet with local leaders and activists so as to investigate, document and report on the current and cumulative impact of United States militarization on Guam. She also urged that measures be taken to increase coordination among United Nations agencies with regard to decolonization and alleviate the cumulative impact of colonization and militarization. Finally, she urged Member States, particularly the administering Powers, to refrain from using the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories for military bases and installations and to pass a resolution condemning the current United States military build-up in Guam as a violation on the part of its administering Power.

21. *Ms. Flores Perez withdrew.*

22. *At the invitation of the Chairman, Ms. Cristobal took a place at the Committee table.*

23. **Ms. Cristobal** said that it was her hope that she would live to see the liberation of her people from oppression, marginalization, colonization and subordination. As a colonized and marginalized community, the Chamorro people suffered from health problems resulting from the socio-political and cultural oppression to which they were being subjected. They suffered from high rates of family violence, substance abuse, teenage suicides, school dropouts and other social problems. In addition, studies had shown that, as compared to the general population, Chamorro youth experienced the highest rates of alcohol and drug abuse, were more actively suicidal, committed more overall offences, reported more gang involvement and made up the majority of criminal recidivists on the island. Chamorros also accounted for most of the 185 AIDS cases that had been documented in Guam and experienced higher than average rates of homelessness.

24. There were high incidences of chronic diseases in Guam and research had attributed the high rates of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, Parkinson's disease and dementia to the nuclear contamination of resources by the United States military. There could be no doubt that the United States military had caused toxic contamination throughout Guam. There was a high incidence of cancer in the villages of Santa Rita and Yigo, which were in close proximity to the two major military bases. Guam had 1,995 times the number of nasopharyngeal cancers found in the United States population, and high levels of arsenic, lead, copper, mercury, tin and polychlorinated biphenyls had been found at Apra Harbor and at the Ordot Landfill. The 2001 Congressional testimony of retired Lt. Charles Bert Schreiber of the United States Navy had revealed the storage and cover-up of contamination by nuclear chemicals by the United States military in Guam. The Chamorros had not been officially informed that they had been consuming contaminated rainwater since the detonation of a hydrogen bomb on Enewetak in the Marshall Islands. The administering Power's Radiation Exposure Compensation Act did not include the local civilian community.

25. The planned influx of military personnel and their families to Guam would represent a 23 per cent increase in the population over the next six and a half years. The unequal distribution of population growth in one sector of society would have disproportionate effects on all sectors of society. To accommodate that influx, military fences were being constructed, necessitating the use of land that had been set aside for return. Coastal recreational areas were being used for live-fire training exercises, and pressure was mounting to privatize the power and water companies. The community's capacity and ability to sustain the quality of the environment and resources would be adversely and irreversibly affected.

26. The United States plan to militarize a Non-Self-Governing Territory contravened the plan of action for the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism and Article 73 *e* of the Charter, which obliged the administering Power to promote the well-being of the people of a Territory. In a secret memorandum issued on 21 November 1945, Vice-Admiral G. D. Murray had recognized Guam's strategic importance and had noted that the island's resources were of little or no relative importance to the welfare of the United States. It was clear that Guam was not being readied to attain a full measure of self-government. She called on the United Nations to carry

out a thorough assessment of Guam's progress towards decolonization in light of the fact that the administering Power had no plans to assist the people of Guam to attain self-determination and had not actively participated in the implementation of the plan of action for the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

27. *Ms. Cristobal withdrew.*

28. *At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Camacho took a place at the Committee table.*

29. **Mr. Camacho** said that he stood before the Committee as a subject of twenty-first century United States colonialism, as a witness to an increasingly global environment of conflict, fear and violence, and as an indigenous Chamorro inhabitant of Guam. Neither the United States nor the United Nations had made any sustained attempt to prepare the Chamorro people of Guam for self-determination in the framework of General Assembly resolution 1541 (XV). The history of United States relations with Guam could be best described as one of apathy, ignorance, racism and unilateralism. The question of the political status of Guam remained unresolved. He urged the Committee to carry out a fact-finding mission to research the popular, legal and scholarly literature on United States colonization and Chamorro decolonization in Guam; to examine the political impact of United States militarization in Okinawa and Japan, including plans to relocate military personnel to Guam without the consent of the people of Guam; and to reject unequivocally the United States request to de-list Guam from the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories.

30. *Mr. Camacho withdrew.*

Draft resolution A/AC.109/2007/L.9

31. *Draft resolution A/AC.109/2007/L.9 was adopted.*

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.